



## Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: November 1, 2012

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**PROJECT**

**Federal Urban Design and Preservation  
and Historic Features Elements of the  
Comprehensive Plan for the National  
Capital**

Washington, D.C.

**SUBMITTED BY**

Staff of the National Capital Planning  
Commission

**REVIEW AUTHORITY**

Preparation and Adoption of Federal Elements  
of the Comprehensive Plan pursuant to 40  
U.S.C. § 8721

**NCPC FILE NUMBER**

CP01C/CP01D

**NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER**

N/A

**APPLICANT'S REQUEST**

Authorization to release draft  
policies for the new Federal Urban  
Design Element and updates to the  
Federal Preservation and Historic  
Features Element of the  
Comprehensive Plan for the  
National Capital for a 90-day public  
comment period.

**PROPOSED ACTION**

Approve as requested

**ACTION ITEM TYPE**

Staff Presentation

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### PROJECT SUMMARY

In 2011, the staff of the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) began work to craft a new Urban Design Element as an addition to the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. While the existing Federal Elements contain policies which pertain to urban design matters, a singularly focused Federal Urban Design Element has not yet been introduced. In July of 2011, the Urban Design Task Force was formed by NCPC Chairman Preston Bryant to work with staff in crafting policies for the new Element. The Task Force included representatives from the General Services Administration, National Park Service, Department of Defense, Commission of Fine Arts, Architect of the Capitol, District of Columbia and a representative from the National Capital Region. The group met five times through August 2012. Additionally, on January 24<sup>th</sup> 2012 two separate workshops were held to gain stakeholder and public input. The input received from these workshops as well as the discussions held with the Urban Design Task Force have produced the draft policies for the new Federal Urban Design Element. The policies are separated into two areas, those policies which deal with issues related to federal facilities and property and policies which address the overall urban design and character of the National Capital.

In addition to the release of the draft Federal Urban Design Element, staff is also requesting the public release of a draft update to the Preservation and Historic Features Element. As part of this update, staff is proposing to rename the element to the Historic Preservation Element and has

reorganized the policy sections. Further, staff has clarified the importance of the “Plan of the City of Washington” which collectively includes both the L’Enfant and McMillan Commission Plans. The updated policies focus on the preservation of the core elements of the Plan of the City of Washington and also look to protect historic federal assets in the National Capital Region as well as to promote sustainability measures in the rehabilitation of historic properties.

It is staff’s request to release both of these draft elements for an extended 90-day public comment period. Further, a public open house will be held on November 14<sup>th</sup> 2012 to allow for a public forum on these draft elements.

## KEY INFORMATION

- The proposed Urban Design Element is a new Element for the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan. To this point, there has not been a Federal Urban Design Element. The District Elements do contain an Urban Design Element and the two components of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital should be compatible.
- Formed in July 2011, the Urban Design Task Force met five times through August 2012. Staff has worked with the Task Force to formulate the draft policies proposed in the Urban Design Element.
- On January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012 two public workshops were held which solicited input from invited stakeholders from around the National Capital Region and the general public. The comments received in these workshops have informed the draft policies in the Urban Design Element.
- The goal of the Federal Urban Design Element is to establish policies which will guide federal agencies to develop and maintain federal buildings and properties in a manner which enhances the adjacent public realm and better integrates federal facilities into the adjacent neighborhood context. The Element also provides policies which look to support the federal government’s role in maintaining and improving Washington DC as a capital city and a growing, active local city and region.
- The Federal Urban Design Element draft policies are organized into two categories. First are policies which pertain to federal facilities and property. These policies generally look to guide the development of federal buildings and sites in a manner that enhances the adjacent public realm. The second category consists of policies which pertain to the federal government’s role in enhancing and preserving the overall character of the national capital.
- Included with this Executive Director’s Recommendation is also a request to release for public comment the draft update to the policies in the Preservation and Historic Features Element. The update looks to retitle the Element to the Historic Preservation Element as

well as focusing the policies on the historic Plan of the City of Washington, which includes the L'Enfant and McMillan Commission Plans.

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## RECOMMENDATION

**Commission authorize** the release of the draft policies in the new Federal Urban Design Element of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital and the update to the Federal Preservation and Historic Features Element of the Comprehensive Plan of the National Capital for a 90-day public review and comment period pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8721

## PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

<b>Previous actions</b>	<b>August 5, 2004</b> – The Commission adopted the updated Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, which included the current Preservation and Historic Features Element.
<b>Remaining actions</b> (anticipated)	– NCPC staff will return to the Commission for approval and adoption of the final Federal Urban Design Element and Federal Preservation and Historic Features Element after the comment period has closed and all received comments have been addressed.

Prepared by D. Zaidain  
October 11, 2012

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## Table of Contents

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I. Project Description .....	4
Background .....	4
Proposal .....	4
II. Project Analysis/Conformance .....	4
Executive Summary .....	4-5
Analysis .....	5
Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital .....	8
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) .....	8
National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) .....	9
III. Consultation .....	9
Coordination with local agencies .....	9
IV. Appendix; Copy of the Draft Environment Element .....	9

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## Figures and Maps

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Figure 1: Plan of the National Capital Region .....	5
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## **I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **Background**

The Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital do not currently contain an Urban Design Element. An Urban Design Element is needed because of the federal government's extensive role in shaping the public space and character of Washington DC, particularly through its facilities and property. The Element is also needed to reinforce the long tradition of the federal government's role in planning and developing the character of Washington as the nation's capital. Further, the National Capital Planning Act of 1952 requires that the District Elements and the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital be compatible. The District Elements include an Urban Design Element which was updated in 2010 and the Federal Elements do not include an Urban Design Element.

To guide this effort, the Chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission authorized the formation of the Urban Design Task Force in July 2011. This subset of the Commission included representatives from the General Services Administration, National Park Service, Department of Defense, Commission of Fine Arts, Architect of the Capitol, District of Columbia and a representative from the region. The Task Force met five times through August of 2012 and worked with staff in developing policy ideas for the Element. Additionally, two public workshops were held on January 24, 2012 to garner input from both invited regional stakeholders and the general public. Input from the Task Force and from the public has informed the creation of the draft policies for the Federal Urban Design Element. These draft policies as well as a draft accompanying narrative are attached as Appendix 1.

In addition to the public release of the draft Federal Urban Design Element, staff is also requesting the release of the draft update to the Preservation and Historic Features Element. There is overlap in some of the core themes of these elements and as such staff believes it would be beneficial to release them both for public review. Because of the breadth of material contained in both, staff is proposing a 90-day public comment period and will be holding a public open house focused on these two Elements on November 14<sup>th</sup> 2012.

### **Proposal**

The proposed new Federal Urban Design Element consists of a goal statement, policies and an accompanying narrative which provides a background and description to the policies. The full element is attached as Appendix 1 and the following is an overview of the element and its components.

Like the other Federal Elements, the new Urban Design Element begins with a goal statement which provides the broad of intent of its policies. The goal statement for the Federal Urban Design Element establishes the public realm of Washington as the overall focus of the element's policies. It reads as follows:

Goal Statement: The federal government should provide and support a public realm that is reflective of Washington's heritage and role as the nation's capital.

The policies provided in the Federal Urban Design Element should be used as guides for federal agencies when making decisions regarding their facilities or their property. Further, the policies act as standards by which the Commission and staff can evaluate project proposals. They also provide a policy foundation to conduct additional plans or studies. The policies are divided into two general areas of focus. These focus areas and their policies are described below.

*Policy Focus Area: Character of the Capital*

This area will focus on the overall character of the capital, both at a city and regional scale. It helps guide the federal interest in shaping that character and enhancing the qualities that reflect Washington's role both as a capital and also a growing, active city within a dynamic region. Issues dealing with the character of the city and aspects of the National Capital Region include overall height of buildings, relationship of private development and public development, street character and other similar issues are covered in the policies.

In developing the policies related to the capital's character, staff first worked with the Urban Design Task Force to identify key qualities which are important to maintaining Washington's heritage and role as a capital city but also its role as a local city. These key qualities were used as a foundation for developing the policies. They include:

1. The presence of federal institutions, monumental buildings, international and cultural institutions and commemoration.
2. The presence of important regional resources and destinations such as Dulles Airport, Mount Vernon, Arlington Cemetery, the Civil War Defenses of Washington and historic parkways.
3. The legacy of the L'Enfant and McMillan Commission Plans
4. A horizontal skyline character composed of signature civic buildings and national icons
5. The clear and distinct view corridors
6. The complimentary relationship between the streets and buildings
7. The important public space formed by squares, circles and parks
8. The green quality of the city
9. The gateways of the city
10. The extensive waterfronts

The Character of the Capital policies are divided into three contextual areas. A summary of these areas and their related policies are described below:

1. The L'Enfant City and its Setting – This area includes the original L'Enfant City bounded by Florida Avenue and stretching to the Anacostia, Potomac and Washington Channel waterfronts. This area represents the main focus of the federal interest and the area with the highest concentration of qualities that define the character of the capital. The setting of this area is also important. This setting includes the Florida Avenue escarpment and the Anacostia and Arlington Hills areas as they impact the setting or backdrop for the L'Enfant City. The policies focus on maintaining the core principles of the L'Enfant Plan which include its original street network and symbolic public spaces. The policies also recognize the importance of Washington's horizontal and public skyline, which is formed by the low lying buildings within the L'Enfant City. Further, the policies also seek to maintain the visual dominance of public symbols on the skyline by calling on limited building height development on the areas known as the topographic bowl, which is the setting for the L'Enfant City. The policies also look to protect street character within this area and also establish Pennsylvania Avenue between the US Capitol and the White House as an important, symbolic boulevard.
2. The District of Columbia - This area includes the remainder of the city outside of the L'Enfant City and its immediate setting. This area contains significant qualities that are part of the capital city's character and of which the federal government should take an interest. The policies in this section focus on protecting views to symbolic public buildings in the L'Enfant City as well as ensuring any private development enhances any adjacent federal building or property.
3. The National Capital Region –There are certain areas throughout the National Capital Region with qualities that are of a federal interest. These include significant federal land holdings and important nationally symbolic sites. The policies reflect the need to protect and enhance the setting of federal land, facilities and commemorative or historic sites. The policies also reflect the importance of the National Park Service Parkways as important characteristics of the region.

*Policy Focus Area: Federal Facilities and Property*

This area establishes policies which guide decisions related to site planning and more “nuts and bolts” issues on how federal buildings and property engage the public realm. This area will tackle topics such as street level retail and uses, programming, design of open spaces and connectivity issues. These policies apply to federal facilities and property in both the urban and regional context. This policy focus area is organized into four sections which are listed below:

1. Inspiring Building Design

2. Activating Street Levels
3. Integrating Buildings and Campuses
4. Enhancement of Public Spaces

The policies related to Inspiring Building Design look to guide building design so that it is integrated into its surrounding context, of a high quality, and utilizes sustainable measures on a district scale. The policies also recognize that the design of federal buildings need not all be iconic and that there are instances where building design as infill given the location and setting of a building's site may be appropriate. In terms of Activating Street Levels, the policies encourage federal facilities to incorporate publicly accessible retail or other active uses at their ground floor and to avoid having blank walls where their buildings meet public space. Policies in the Integrating Building and Campuses focus on ensuring that federal buildings or campus environments with multiple buildings are integrated with the surrounding community. This includes ensuring that adjacent connections such as streets, bike trails or other facilities are able to continue through the sites, as appropriate with respect to security concerns. These buildings or campuses should also respect local design plans or guidelines and ensure that their entrances are well designed and accessible. Finally, in focusing on the Enhancement of Public Spaces, the policies look to minimize intrusions into public space by limiting obstructions such as curb cuts and ensuring that security elements are either within the building yard or appropriately located at the edges of the public realm. The policies also encourage appropriately programmed memorial landscapes that can serve dual purposes given their context.

The full draft Federal Urban Design Element including all of the policies and accompanying narrative are attached as Appendix 1.

#### *Updates to the Preservation and Historic Features Element*

In addition to developing the new Federal Urban Design Element, NCPC staff has also crafted a draft update to the Federal Preservation and Historic Features Element. The update looks to rename the Element to the Historic Preservation Element so as to provide more clarity as to the Element's focus and to differentiate it from the Urban Design Element which also considers historic features. The draft update, including the narrative and updated policies, is attached as Appendix 2. The proposed changes to the policies which are represented in a mark-up document are attached as Appendix 3 with a clean version of the proposed policies attached as Appendix 4. In summary the update proposes to do the following:

- Focus the element on the important features of the Plan of the City of Washington, which includes the L'Enfant and McMillan Commission Plans.
- Establish a policy which considers the preservation of regional historic properties
- Account for the integration of sustainability objectives with historic preservation



The update to this element will be released with the new Federal Urban Design Element for a 90-day public comment period. A public open house to gather input on the two elements will be held on November 14<sup>th</sup> 2012 at the District Architecture Center at 421 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NW.

Once the public comment period for these two elements has been completed, staff will compile comments and input from all sources and revise the proposals. Once revisions have been complete and the any issues resolved, the two elements will be brought to the Commission for adoption.

## **II. PROJECT ANALYSIS/CONFORMANCE**

### **Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital**

The new Federal Urban Design Element and the update to the Federal Preservation and Historic Features Element of the Comprehensive Plan is provided in accordance with the provisions of the preparation and adoption of Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan specified at 40 U.S.C. § 8721.

### **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

Staff reviewed the proposal in accordance with NCPC's Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures, and determined that the proposed federal element update can be categorically excluded from further environmental analysis and documentation. The action is determined by the staff to qualify as categorical exclusion as cited at the Commission's procedure (11) "Adopt a Federal Element of the Comprehensive Plan or amendment thereto, 40 U.S.C. 8721(a); D.C. Code 2-1003."

### **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)**

This proposal does not sustain characteristics as a federal undertaking. The proposal of policy revision does not implement, contract, or take other actions that would preclude consideration of the full range of alternatives to avoid or minimize harm to federal historic properties. Consequently, the proposed action does not require review pursuant to the NHPA, Section 106 process.

## **III. CONSULTATION**

### **Coordination with federal and local agencies**

The new Federal Urban Design Element was formulated in concert with the Urban Design Task Force which consisted of representatives from:

- General Services Administration
- Department of Defense
- National Park Service

- Commission of Fine Arts
- Architect of the Capitol
- District of Columbia Office of Planning
- A regional representative

Further, a stakeholder workshop was held on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012 where stakeholder agencies from federal and local units of government around the region attended to provide input into the Federal Urban Design Element. In terms of the update to the Preservation and Historic Features Element, a draft update was circulated to federal and District of Columbia stakeholders on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012 with comments being received from the District of Columbia Office of Planning.

#### **IV. APPENDIX**

Appendix 1 – The draft Federal Urban Design Element

Appendix 2 – The draft updated to the Preservation and Historic Features Element

Appendix 3 – Proposed changes to the policies in the Preservation and Historic Features Element  
(track-changes document)

Appendix 4 – Proposed updated policies for the Preservation and Historic Features Element  
(document with changes “accepted”)

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Appendix 1 – the draft Federal Urban Design Element

**Federal Urban Design Element  
DRAFT Narrative and Policies**

**Draft Goal Statement:** The federal government should provide and support a public realm that is reflective of Washington's heritage and role as the nation's capital.

The Federal Urban Design Element of the Comprehensive Plan provides guidance related to the quality of the function, form and design of Washington's public realm. The Element describes key qualities that support the city's distinguished character as the nation's capital, including the resources that are important to the federal government. The policies also provide guidance to improve the overall design and planning of federal lands and facilities throughout the National Capital Region and to ensure they are integrated with their adjacent host communities.

**Washington's Evolving Urban Character**

The urban design of Washington DC is unique among American cities. As one of the most iconic and methodically planned capitals in the world, the city was established at the intersection of the northern and southern regions of a fledgling nation. President George Washington selected the area at the confluence of the Potomac River and the Eastern Branch (now known as the Anacostia) as a symbolic location that would balance the interests of the nation's agrarian south with the more urban commercial interests of the north. The Residence Act of 1790 established the area between the Eastern Branch and the Potomac River as the site for the new Federal City. In 1791, President Washington appointed Pierre L'Enfant to design the new capital city. L'Enfant worked with Andrew Ellicott to survey and plan the form of the city. The formal boulevards and sweeping views of Paris and Versailles were important inspirations for L'Enfant's Plan. He was also moved by the country's democratic ideals. Hence, L'Enfant conceived Washington as not just a functional city, but also as a symbolic landscape. He planned the United States Capitol building as the focal point of the new federal city and situated it high on Jenkins Hill, now known as Capitol Hill. The President's House, a more modest structure, was situated down a grand boulevard, Pennsylvania Avenue. He laid a traditional street grid over a network of sweeping ceremonial boulevards that expressed the nation's openness and grand aspirations. Where the two intersected, he proposed circles, squares and other public spaces to serve as focal points of civic and community life. The grandest of these public spaces is the National Mall, the nation's most prominent gathering space for self-expression and commemoration.

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the capital city had not fully realized L'Enfant's vision. In 1901, Senator James McMillan convened a Commission to study the form of Washington and to improve its character in the grand traditions of the City Beautiful Movement. The resulting McMillan Plan formalized the National Mall, removing unsightly railroad tracks and other incompatible infrastructure from its space. The plan's vision led to the grand commemorative

and cultural spaces of the National Mall and established the Federal Triangle as a core federal enclave with public buildings reflecting the Beaux-Arts tradition.

Building upon the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans, other planning initiatives have shaped the form of the city. In 1997, the National Capital Planning Commission issued the Extending The Legacy Plan. The Plan sought to eliminate the barriers created in the years of urban renewal programs, including the removal of freeways and rail infrastructure that fragmented Washington's core. The Plan also proposed physically refocusing the city on the U.S. Capitol Building by strengthening the axial streets such as North, South, and East Capitol Streets.

Several subsequent planning initiatives strive to move the Legacy Plan toward implementation. In 2009, the joint NCPC and CFA Monumental Core Framework Plan suggested a series of infrastructure moves and redevelopment strategies that would better integrate Washington's neighborhoods with federal enclaves and commemorative sites. In 2012, NCPC released the draft Southwest Ecodistrict Plan, which provides recommendations to revitalize the Southwest Federal Center and create an all-new sustainable, mixed-use neighborhood. The Plan also incorporates energy and stormwater management principles on a precinct scale. Each of these planning initiatives are recognized in this Federal Urban Design Element and help establish the foundation for Washington's character now and into the future.

### **Defining a Capital City: Washington's Key Qualities**

As the seat of the United States federal government, Washington embodies numerous qualities that define it as the nation's capital. However, it also has characteristics of a livable and growing world-class city. Together these qualities form the foundation of Washington's character and the basis for the policies in the Federal Urban Design Element. The federal government's activities related to public space design, federal building design and land management should reinforce and enhance these qualities. For example, buildings should be accessible, sustainable, and supportive of placemaking principles in Washington's communities. They should celebrate and activate Washington's unique public spaces and respect the core ideals of the L'Enfant, McMillan and Legacy Plans.

#### **Key Qualities**

- The presence of federal institutions, monumental buildings, international and cultural institutions and commemoration

The concentration of prominent federal institutions, such as the White House, the U.S. Capitol, and the buildings of the Federal Triangle are a central feature of iconic Washington. Likewise, the city is the home to international and cultural institutions such as foreign embassies, museums, and galleries. The museums of the Smithsonian Institution, for example, are each housed in iconic buildings that contribute to the character of the city. In addition to prominent buildings, Washington's parks and open spaces contribute strongly to its identity. From the National Mall to the more intimate pocket parks along Embassy Row, these memorial parks provide places for

Americans to explore important topics of history and culture through art. They also serve as areas for relaxation and recreation.

- The presence of important regional resources and destinations such as Dulles Airport, Mount Vernon, Arlington Cemetery, the Civil War Defenses of Washington and historic parkways.

Beyond the L'Enfant City, there are numerous important resources and destinations that contribute to the character of the National Capital Region. Examples include important architectural resources such as Dulles Airport, a midcentury icon by architect Eero Saarinen, and commemorative spaces such as the Iwo Jima Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery. The region also contains historically significant sites such as George Washington's estate Mount Vernon and the Civil War Defenses of Washington (formerly known as Fort Circle Parks). Federal facilities and lands such as Fort Belvoir, the National Institutes of Health, and the rural-like setting of the George Washington Memorial Parkway contribute to the region's unmistakable sense of place.

- The legacy of the L'Enfant and McMillian Plans

The core elements of the L'Enfant and McMillian Plans are the foundation of central Washington's form. The L'Enfant Plan's formal street grid and resulting view corridors as well as its strategically placed public spaces form the backbone of central Washington's character. The McMillian Plan formalized and extended the National Mall, established the Federal Triangle and preserved the natural qualities of Rock Creek Park. These elements are a lasting legacy of these plans and provide key qualities that define the city's character.

- A horizontal skyline character composed of signature civic buildings and national icons

Washington's skyline is recognizable throughout the world. It is not characterized by tall, "skyscraper" commercial buildings. Rather, its skyline is distinguished by symbolic, civic features such as the U.S Capitol dome and the Washington Monument. These iconic skyline elements reflect the significance and founding of Washington as the capitol city of the United States, with public institutions at its core.

- The clear and distinct view corridors

Sweeping vistas between symbolic buildings, important open spaces, and public institutions define the capital city's public realm. The area's natural rolling topography enhances views to and from important landscapes. Important view corridors extend beyond the limits of the District of Columbia, and into the surrounding region, such as those of the Washington Monument from Ronald Reagan National Airport or the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

- The complimentary relationship between the streets and buildings

As a low-rise city, Washington is characterized by its "human-scaled" streets. A comfortable environment fostered in large part by the relationship of the height of buildings to the width of

the street. Tall buildings can be imposing to the public space below and even cause temperature differences from opposite street sides because of shadowing affects. As a low-rise city with lower scaled buildings, Washington's streets have greater access to light and air. The result is an environment that feels more comfortable, less imposing, and generally more conducive to the activities of daily urban life.

- The important public space formed by squares, circles and parks

A legacy of the L'Enfant and McMillian Plans is a fine network of squares, circles and parks. These formal and informal public spaces, including the grand National Mall and rambling Rock Creek Park, provide opportunities for active and passive recreation, commemoration, and first amendment activities.

- The green quality of the city

Washington is frequently referred to as urban yet green. This is due in large part by the presence of a strong and growing tree canopy. In fact, Washington is greener today than it was just five years ago. The District's urban tree canopy grew by 2.1 percent since 2007 and now covers 37.2% of the city.

- The gateways of the city

Entering Washington from surrounding areas provides a dramatic experience and a visual queue that one is entering the capital city. Crossing the Potomac River via the Memorial, Key or 14<sup>th</sup> Street bridges provides sweeping views of the important symbolic buildings located in the city's core. Access points from Maryland through New York Avenue also provide visual glimpses to the U.S. Capitol Building's dome, indicating to travelers that they are entering the capital. These important gateways are a significant quality to Washington's distinctive character.

- The extensive waterfronts

Within the District of Columbia, there are approximately 47 miles of waterfront running along the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers and the Washington Channel. These areas are a tremendous asset to the city and provide open space, recreation, and development opportunity. Beyond the District of Columbia, areas such as Alexandria, Virginia have historic waterfronts contribute to the distinct character of the region.

## **Urban Design Element: Policies**

The Urban Design Element is separated into two policy sections: The Character of the Capital and Federal Facilities and Property.

The Character of the Capital section frames the federal interest regarding the character of the capital and region. Policies in this section guide the federal government to protect the resources and urban design qualities that physically and symbolically support Washington as the nation's

capital. These policies work in tandem with the District Urban Design Element of the Comprehensive Plan to establish goals for both the federal and District governments in enhancing the overall character of Washington, DC.

The Federal Facilities and Property section guide the design of federal buildings, campuses, and commemorative sites. The policies encourage the federal government to be greater stewards of the public realm and to integrate lands and buildings within their host communities.

### **The Character of the Capital**

Washington functions both as the seat of the federal government and the home to a growing population approaching nearly 600,000 residents. It accommodates the permanent institutions and symbolic functions of a capital and the goods and services associated with individual daily life. The balance of federal and local activities shapes the urban design conditions of the city.

The Federal Urban Design element provides guidance on a range of topics where federal and local interests intersect. For example, federal buildings should strive to provide retail and other services that not only provide amenities for the federal employees but also provide benefits to the surrounding community. Commemorative spaces can function not only as a place for reflection, but also as places for recreation and gathering by neighbors. This integration must be influenced by both the federal and local governments working together. In planning for the overall character of the capital city, private development must relate and be integrated into the federal development and it must work collaboratively to create and support a dynamic capital city. The federal and local government must work together to ensure this integration in planning Washington.

### **The L'Enfant City and its Setting**

The L'Enfant City represents the strongest concentration of federal interest in the region. The plan itself is on the National Register of Historic Places providing federal protection for its streets, development blocks, and public spaces, one of the few urban plans to receive this level of designation. Approximately 50% of the area within the L'Enfant City is federally owned. This includes iconic locations such as the U.S. Capitol and its grounds, the White House and surrounding Executive Office Buildings, the headquarter buildings of the Federal Triangle and the National Mall. The L'Enfant City also provides the location for the iconic structures which establish the character of the city skyline. The U.S. Capitol, The Washington Monument, and various memorials contribute to Washington's recognizable skyline. The area's natural topography, including a feature known as the topographic bowl provides a dramatic backdrop for these iconic buildings. The topographic bowl includes an elevated ridge – or escarpment - around the L'Enfant City that offers extraordinary views into a lower-lying area of symbolic buildings and sites. Development along the topographic bowl, which includes the escarpment along Florida Avenue, the Anacostia Hillside and the ridge in Arlington, County Virginia, should be kept low and at a level that does not compete with these skyline defining the public structures. At night, the skyline is reinforced by a hierarchy of lighting levels with the U.S. Capitol, the Washington Monument, and Lincoln Memorial being the most prominent.

This hierarchy should be maintained to protect the public definition of Washington's skyline. The policies in this section of the Urban Design Element establish the priorities for the federal government in curating the L'Enfant City and its setting.

### **Section A: The L'Enfant City and its Setting Policies**

The federal government should implement and support policies and actions that:

1. Maintain the consistent building height and the relationship of building height and street width as established in the Height of Buildings Act within the L'Enfant City.
2. Maintain or reestablish the integrity of the original L'Enfant Plan rights-of-way wherever possible.
3. Encourage private and public building design that enhances public spaces and respects symbolic civic buildings and federal icons.
4. Promote and maintain Pennsylvania Avenue between the U.S. Capitol and the White House as a multi-modal street bordered by an actively programmed, lively, pedestrian- oriented public realm that maintains the avenue's important reciprocal views.
5. Maintain the character of the Federal Triangle and the formal design of the National Mall as established in the McMillian Plan.
6. Foster active, enhanced and publicly accessible waterfronts along the Potomac River, Anacostia River, and Washington Channel with unobstructed views to important civic buildings and national icons.
7. Uphold the design of transportation infrastructure that respects viewsheds to symbolic civic buildings and federal icons and does not negatively impact street character.
8. Maintain the prominence of the topographic bowl formed by lowland and rim features of the L'Enfant City and environs by controlling the urban and natural skylines in the Anacostia, Florida Avenue, and Arlington County portions of the bowl as follows:
  - a. Preserve as much as possible the green setting of the Anacostia hills and integrate building masses with, and subordinate to, the natural topography.



- b. Maintain the Florida Avenue escarpment's natural definition of the L'Enfant Plan boundaries by retaining developments that are fitted to the landforms and by promoting low-rise development that can be distinguished from the greater height of the L'Enfant City's core areas.
  - c. Within the western portion of the bowl, retain a horizontal skyline by relating building heights to the natural slope and rim areas of Arlington Ridge as viewed from the Capitol, the Mall, and other riverside outlooks.
9. Encourage building, street and exterior lighting that respects the hierarchy among memorials, monuments, and important civic buildings and spaces of the nation's capital, with the U.S. Capitol being the most prominent feature in the nighttime skyline. Signage, illuminated billboards and/or other lighting should enhance viewsheds to symbolic civic and federal buildings and should not impact the setting of the National Mall.

### **The District of Columbia**

Critical federal interests extend beyond the L'Enfant City. Major federal land holdings include Rock Creek Park, the National Arboretum, and the U.S. Soldiers and Airmen's Home; each representing areas of federal interest. Additionally, private development throughout the District of Columbia could impact the important setting of the L'Enfant City and affect the horizontal skyline by allowing extraordinarily tall buildings to bump out of the setting and compete with the important iconic buildings within the L'Enfant City. Private development could also affect important views of iconic buildings within the L'Enfant City as well as critical historical street viewsheds if not scaled properly. The policies in this section of the Federal Urban Design Element recognize these as important characteristics outside of the L'Enfant City.

### **Section B: The District of Columbia Policies**

The federal government should implement and support policies and actions that:

- 1. Encourage building heights that respect symbolic public buildings in the skyline and are proportionate to the streets on which they are located.
- 2. Maintain or reinforce views to and settings of federal properties in the District of Columbia and to symbolic civic buildings and federal icons within the L'Enfant City.
- 3. Encourage private development to enhance the character of any adjacent federal facilities or federal park land.

## **The National Capital Region**

The National Capital Planning Act of 1952 establishes NCPC as a federal planning agency with a purview beyond the District of Columbia boundaries. The Commission reviews federal development projects within the National Capital Region and maintains cooperative relationships with jurisdictions throughout the area. Additionally, there are significant federal properties within the region such as The Pentagon complex, Fort Belvoir, the National Institutes of Health and others. There also important commemorative and historic assets which help establish the region as the setting for the capital city. The approaches to the L'Enfant City through the parkways and other routes establish the gateway character for city and provide the experience of entering into a national capital. The policies established in this section reflect the importance of these resources.

### **Section C: The National Capital Region policies**

The federal government should implement and support policies that:

1. Reinforce the prominence of gateways and the experience of entering Washington by:
  - a. Working with local jurisdictions to ensure the protection and enhancement of gateway routes.
  - b. Regulating the scale and use of nearby development.
  - c. Improving and enhancing gateways with street trees and amenities.
2. Maintain the prominence of federal icons and federal park land by ensuring surrounding development is complementary.
3. Maintain or enhance the characteristics of the National Park Service Parkway by:
  - a. Maintaining parkways as scenic landscape corridors and protecting their historic character.
  - b. Encouraging local jurisdictions to plan and zone development so that it is not visible from parkways.
  - c. Encouraging local jurisdictions to minimize — through planning, regulation, and thoughtful design — the impact of development that is visible from parkways.

- d. Requiring actions to minimize and mitigate negative impacts to maintain parkway characteristics where transportation system impacts are unavoidable.
- 4. Preserve the region's tree canopy and expand the region's tree canopy where possible.
- 5. Enhance and support public access to regional waterfronts along the Potomac River, Anacostia River and other tributaries by:
  - a. Avoiding the creation of physical barriers to the waterfront.
  - b. Determining building height based on the building's proximity to the shoreline.
  - c. Designing and locating bridges so that they minimally affect local riverine habitat, waterways, shorelines, and valleys.

## **Federal Facilities and Property**

How federal facilities are situated and designed plays an important role in establishing the quality of the public realm around them. With a concentration in the downtown area, federal facilities impact the public realm of central Washington. Campus and base facilities such as the National Institute of Health and Ft. Belvoir Virginia impact the quality of their host community. As such, it is critical that federal facilities, whether they are located in an urban or suburban context, address the public space around them. This includes ensuring that their street levels are activated and accessible and do not obstruct public spaces. The designs of the building should fit and engage the context, whether it is a signature location at a terminated vista, or an infill location within a historic fabric of a city center.

The policies established in the following section of the focuses on design issues related to Federal Facilities and Property. The policies are organized into four focus areas which reflect the priorities of federal building design. These include encouraging quality design, enhancing public spaces, activating street levels, and integrating buildings and campuses into their host communities. The policies work in concert with those established in the Federal Environment, Workplace and Historic Preservation Elements, all of which provide direction that should be considered during a facilities design phase.

## **Inspiring Building Design**

The Urban Design Element establishes policies that guide the design of federal buildings, including modernizations, rehabilitations, expansions and new construction. The policies do not endorse any typology of architecture but look to guide how a federal building's outward appearance can enhance the surrounding context. The policies encourage facility designers to

fully explore the context of a site's location. Characteristics of the site and its context are critical to an appropriately designed building. These include issues of whether the site is prominent and at the terminus of a viewshed, or if the site is an infill site that is contributing to an overall character of a street corridor. While the design and construction of a federal building should be of a high quality, not all federal buildings have to be iconic in design and the design approach should contribute to a sense of place in an area. Further, in exploring the efficiency and sustainability of a building, designers should explore the opportunities presented from other buildings around it. Combining stormwater management systems or sharing energy generation can minimize design and construction costs and maximize efficiencies. This precinct-level approach to sustainability should also be a core value in designing a high quality federal building.

### **Section D: Inspiring Building Design Policies**

New, redesigned, modernized or refurbished federal buildings should:

1. Reflect their importance in the National Capital Region and be designed and constructed to the highest quality.
2. Complement or improve their context by providing consistency with the adjacent urban fabric. This should include consistency with scale, materials, streetwalls or heights where possible.
3. Implement sustainable site and building design on a precinct level where possible.
4. Achieve a balance between iconic design and infill design as appropriate to the location and setting of the building's site.

### **Activating Street Levels**

A critical component of how a building interacts with the space and character around it is typically determined by how the building engages at the street level. The street level is where the interaction between a building and the people using it, observing it, or passing it occurs. The quality of a building's street level reflects its orientation to the human element. An active and lively street level can inspire a sense of accessibility. It can convey information or artistic qualities. It can also enliven the public spaces around it by providing active uses such as retail or other types of engaging uses. It is the aim of this section of the Urban Design Element to inspire facility designers to rethink the notion of traditional federal building design and look for creative ways to activate the street level and avoid the use of blank walls or obtrusive security elements.

### **Section E: Activating Street Level Policies**

The federal government should:

1. Incorporate publicly accessible retail and/or cultural resources into the street level of federal buildings where possible.
2. Avoid blank walls where a building meets adjacent public space and activate street level facades by utilizing art displays, transparent materials or other appropriate methods. Ensure that buildings are as publicly accessible as possible at the street level. Security measures should be limited and integrated into the public realm. Primary building entrances should be appropriately located in relationship to public space.

### **Integrating Buildings and Campuses**

Within the National Capital Region, the federal government maintains large, multi-structure campus environments as employment centers. Facilities such as Fort Belvoir in, Virginia, National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland or Bolling Air Force Base and St. Elizabeths in the District of Columbia maintain a large presence in the community in which they are located. Their design, particularly as it relates to security and space, tremendously impacts the character of adjacent neighborhoods. This section of the Urban Design Element aims to better integrate these campus environments into their surrounding context. While acknowledging the need for security, the policies encourage the extension of local street, trail and pedestrian connections through these properties so that continuous local and regional networks can be maintained. These networks can also assist federal employees in walking or biking between campus locations. The policies also acknowledge the importance of locating amenities such as retail or parking facilities in a manner so that they can be used by local residents and not strictly for federal employees. Federal campuses also should consult local plans and design guidelines not only to understand the context in which they are located, but also to strive and meet local directives for signage and overall neighborhood character.

### **Section F: Integrating Buildings and Campuses Policies**

The federal government should:

1. Provide access to or connections through campuses, building yards, plazas, or courtyards for local and regional trails, bikeways, pedestrian ways or open space networks where possible. Agencies should explore programming these areas with publicly accessible amenities such as art installations and/or farmers markets.
2. Provide, to the extent possible, multi-modal street connections or extensions to adjacent streets or local street grid to and through installations to provide a continuous transportation network.

3. Locate and design appropriate amenities including retail and parking facilities so that they are accessible to the local community where possible.
4. Design pedestrian and vehicular entrances or any physical gateways to federal campuses and buildings to be as inviting and as accessible as possible.
5. Consult and respect the design guidelines or goals of the local host community.

### **Enhancement of Public Spaces**

Through the L'Enfant and McMillian Plans, Washington DC has developed the physical framework for high quality public spaces. The squares, circles and opens spaces in Washington and the region often play dual rolls as not only active park space for local neighborhoods, or lunch time gathering spots for local workers but they also serve as commemorative sites or gathering places for First Amendment expressions. Federal buildings can have a distinct impact on the quality of public spaces around them. Entrances to service areas, perimeter security elements, storm water management systems and other required building infrastructure can be obtrusive to public spaces if not placed and designed appropriately. Public spaces around federal facilities can contribute to an area's vitality by providing seating elements, public art or other activating elements within them. The policies in the Urban Design Element encourage the design of federal buildings and commemorative landscapes so that they activate the public spaces around them and assist in creating a sense of place within an urban area.

### **Section G: Enhancement of Public Spaces Policies**

The federal government should:

1. Minimize public space obstructions such as vehicular curb cuts, orient service areas away from major streets and locate them in the area of least visibility on the site.
2. Provide memorial landscapes that are adaptable and programmed with a balance of active and passive uses and amenities as appropriate to the surrounding context.
3. Provide, where possible, well landscaped areas with active amenities such as seating, public art, educational or commemorative elements or other amenities in public spaces around federal buildings or federal icons.
4. Utilize sustainable features in their landscapes and adjacent public space, where possible.

5. Locate perimeter security elements on the building site and not in the public right-of-way where possible. These elements should be minimized, unobtrusive, and relate to the surrounding context.

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## Appendix 2 – The draft update to the Preservation and Historic Features Element

### Historic Preservation Element (new title)

**Goal: Preserve, protect, and rehabilitate historic properties in the National Capital Region and promote design and development that is respectful of the guiding principles established by the Plan of the City of Washington (L'Enfant and McMillan Plans) and the symbolic character of the capital's setting.**

Washington's unique character rests on the foundation of its historic planning, notably the built and open space features of the Plan of the City of Washington, which includes both the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans. Both the Baroque influence of the L'Enfant Plan and the City Beautiful ideals of the McMillan Plan are responsible for much of the physical form the city takes today. Throughout the city, the design and location of public and private buildings reinforce the plan's principles. Washington's historic properties typically contribute to and complement the visionary long-range plans that have provided the basis for the capital's development over the centuries. More so than in most American cities, high standards of urban design and historic preservation have played a strong role in creating the appearance and character of the national capital which is so admired today.

The federal government has, from its inception, implemented L'Enfant's bold but flexible vision by constructing great buildings to house the seat of the national government. As the federal government built out the sites identified in the L'Enfant Plan, it has added extensive facilities in other parts of the city and the region. Examples of significant factors that have spurred growth and change through the centuries include: national events such as the Civil War, the New Deal, and World War II; planning initiatives such as the McMillan Plan; the implementation of urban renewal in the 1950's and 1960's as well as technological and transportation advances such as Metrorail. Federal buildings and sites illustrate the planning and architectural development of the city and region as well as the history of the federal establishment. Landmarks such as the U.S. Capitol, the White House, the National Mall and its memorials and museums, and Arlington National Cemetery have come to symbolize the nation and its democratic ideals.

Although the predominantly federal and commemorative areas around the National Mall may be Washington's most widely recognized area, the capital city is at the same time an active commercial and residential city with neighborhoods, parks, and buildings that are important to Washingtonians and their sense of history and community. Even in these non-federal areas, the federal government has played a major role in shaping the historic urban fabric. Much of this rich historical planning record is also evident in the city's architecture. The L'Enfant Plan's streets and places—and their extension by the 1893 Permanent System of Highways Act—as well as the 1901 McMillan Plan and the 1910 Height of Buildings Act have directed the character and orderly development of the entire city.

At a regional scale, the Washington area developed historically with large plantations and small family farms, dotted with crossroads and market towns, a pattern that was initially little changed



by the creation of the capital city. Notable port towns and later military forts overlooked the Potomac River and the capital city. Settlements and commercial centers, many quite independent of the presence of the national capital, arose along the great variety of transportation routes typical of the mid-Atlantic region.

The federal government, over time, shaped the development and character of the region as a whole. The nineteenth-century construction of military and naval installations, during times of war as well as peace, was followed in the twentieth century by the expansion of federal offices and research facilities. The National Institutes of Health, the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Suitland Federal Center, the Pentagon, and Dulles Airport (all of which include or are historic properties) are just a few of the federal facilities that have greatly influenced the private development of the region. The purchase of parkland in Maryland by the National Capital Planning Commission through the Capper-Cramton Act and the construction of parkways are other examples of federal land-use decisions that have shaped the region.

In recognition of this history, the region's municipal and county governments have protected historic resources they deem important for local or, indeed, state and national historical significance. Alexandria, in 1946, created one of the first historic districts in the nation in order to preserve the colonial and early federal character of its port city. The U.S. Congress designated the Georgetown Historic District in the Old Georgetown Act in 1950. The Joint Committee on Landmarks published the District's first list of historic properties in 1964. In 1966, Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act, adding to the establishment of national standards and procedures for the protection of historic properties. Since Home Rule in 1973 and the D.C. Historic Preservation Act of 1978, the District of Columbia government has identified and protected private properties of local significance throughout the District. Local jurisdictions in Virginia and Maryland responded to the growing historic preservation interest at the national, state, and local levels by establishing ordinances to protect their historic properties. These ordinances and programs have contributed to the protection of individual buildings and their settings, open space, farms, historic neighborhoods, and commercial centers, even in an era of sustained growth in the National Capital Region. The variety of historic properties reflects the rich history of the region and its people.

### **Historic Preservation Planning**

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) established, as principle and law, the preservation of our nation's historical and cultural heritage. This law provides the framework for federal preservation policy, authorizes legislation to fund preservation activities, and establishes State Historic Preservation Offices. While all federal agencies have some degree of responsibility for historic preservation, the National Park Service (NPS) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) are the federal agencies charged with the management and oversight of National Historic Preservation Act programs. NPS is responsible for the administration of the National Register of Historic Places, the nation's inventory of significant historic properties. NPS is also responsible for publishing guidance on treatment options for historic properties including preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. NPS

publishes the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, the benchmark by which federal agencies and others assess the effects of a proposed project on historic resources.

The ACHP is an independent federal agency responsible for advising the President and Congress on historic preservation policy. One of the ACHP's primary responsibilities is overseeing Section 106 review - the process of commenting on federal projects that affect properties listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The ACHP publishes implementing regulations for Section 106 of NHPA which describe the process for conducting Section 106 consultation. All federal agencies, no matter their mission, have an affirmative responsibility to identify, protect, and manage historic resources under their jurisdiction. Federal agencies must take historic properties into account when planning actions that might affect them, with the goal of avoiding or minimizing adverse effects to their physical and historical integrity. If adverse effects cannot be avoided or minimized, federal agencies must mitigate these impacts.

The National Capital Planning Commission has a significant and unique role in the National Capital Region. Under the terms of the Planning Act of 1952, NCPC reviews many of the projects undertaken by federal agencies and makes important decisions about the coordination of federal planning activities, many of which involve historic properties. The Commission also has an independent approval, or licensing, authority for federal projects in the District of Columbia and for some District of Columbia government projects in the Central Area. The Commission's open public process and its unique planning perspective and role, underscored by the Comprehensive Plan and the Commission's other plans and policies, are the foundations of its decision-making.

NCPC is committed to supporting historic preservation, by law and through its policies, review process, and special studies. The policies established in the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan as well as the Commission's *Legacy Plan*, *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*, and *Monumental Core Framework Plan* provide a framework for historic preservation planning. The Commission continues to be a leader in the advocacy of coordinated urban and regional planning that accommodates the changing needs of the federal government while preserving the significant historic buildings and places that make the nation's capital the uniquely symbolic place it is.

The Commission recognizes that sustained citizen engagement in the public process is fundamental to the broad acceptance of historic preservation decisions. The public dissemination of planning, historic preservation, and zoning information has resulted in a high general level of knowledge of, and interest in, federal and local decision making. Federal agencies increasingly have considered local planning initiatives and goals in their design and planning, including historic preservation. Factors such as the establishment of home rule in the District, county historic preservation and environmental protection ordinances, revitalized local planning agencies, landmark designations and zoning overlays, and greater citizen interest and involvement all have contributed to fuller coordination among federal and local governments. It is important that this coordination continue in order to manage the growth and development of the capital in the context of its history.

## Policies

### The Historic Plan of Washington, D.C.

The 1791 L'Enfant Plan and the 1901 McMillan Plan established an urban design framework for the capital city that remains one of the world's great examples of urban planning. Collectively, these plans are known as the Plan of the City of Washington and the planning principles remain intact and continue to influence the design of public spaces in Washington today. Pierre L'Enfant crafted the L'Enfant Plan, which established the basic framework for the city by creating a regular orthogonal grid divided into four quadrants, with the U.S. Capitol at the centerpoint. L'Enfant superimposed a series of diagonal avenues on the orthogonal grid, thereby creating a system of open space and parks where the two intersected. These open spaces and vistas are as integral to the design of the City as the street network. In addition, the width and openness of the original streets of the L'Enfant Plan and the extended main axial boulevards established public space that defines the character of the city. These includes North, East and South Capitol Streets and major avenues such as Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York and Wisconsin Avenues. Vistas outward from vantage points within Washington and inward from points along the rim of the topographic bowl are central to Washington's dramatic character. Examples of these vistas include the west campus of St. Elizabeth's Hospital and other parts of the Anacostia ridge, the Arlington ridge, and the escarpment north of Florida Avenue, NW.

The L'Enfant Plan's system of streets, open spaces, public buildings, and developable blocks has largely been maintained over the centuries, and have functioned as a framework for the city's growth. The McMillan Plan both altered and extended the L'Enfant Plan, resulting in the notable planning framework that we know today. Building upon the Baroque ideals of the L'Enfant Plan, the McMillan Plan reinforced the idea of grand public spaces and civic buildings based on the City Beautiful Movement. The McMillan Plan focused on restoring the National Mall as originally envisioned by L'Enfant as an uninterrupted greensward, creating an enclave for government offices in the triangle formed by Pennsylvania Avenue, 15<sup>th</sup> Street, and the Mall, and establishing a comprehensive park and recreation system throughout the region. The District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service recognize the significance of the Historic Plan of Washington, D.C. and protect it through historic designation. Even as the region has grown and federal facilities have spread throughout the region, the L'Enfant City remains the heart of the nation's capital and a priceless historical resource—providing the setting for the federal government as well as commercial enterprise and residential neighborhoods.

The Commission has a central role in the coordinated efforts of the federal government to protect the Plan of the City of Washington's legacy. The Commission conducted a special long-range planning study as part of the *Legacy Plan* in 1997. The *Legacy Plan* provides guidance for the protection of the City of Washington's key strengths while accommodating its future growth. The Commission's *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* of 2001 proposed policies that protect

the historic open space on and near the National Mall by locating memorials throughout Washington. The Commission's *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* of 2002 established goals for the protection of buildings, settings, streetscapes, and associated open space through the coordinated design of security features where required. The *Monumental Core Framework Plan* of 2009 advances the vision of the *Legacy Plan*. The Framework Plan was a joint effort of the Commission and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, and the purpose of the plan is to transform the federal precincts surrounding the National Mall into vibrant destinations and to improve the physical and visual connections between the city, the National Mall, and the waterfront. Furthermore, the Federal Urban Design Element of the Comprehensive Plan provides policy guidance to federal agencies in improving building design and supporting an active public realm in Washington, DC and the National Capital Region. As the Commission adopts future plans and looks towards the future, the urban design framework of the Plan of the City of Washington will continue to provide guidance.

### **Section A: The Plan of the City of Washington Policies**

The federal government should:

1. Preserve, rehabilitate, enhance, and restore (where applicable) the Plan of the City of Washington (L'Enfant and McMillan Plans) and the urban design principles established by the Plan including building placement, street layout, vistas, and open spaces.
2. Locate memorials, museums, and major federal facilities with respect for the urban design principles established by the Plan of the City of Washington (L'Enfant and McMillan Plans).

#### Historic Plan of Washington: Views

The federal government should:

3. Protect and maintain views outward from the L'Enfant City and views inward from vantage points along the rim of the topographic bowl from inappropriate intrusions and modifications. Open space should be preserved to allow for public use and enjoyment of these views.
4. Protect the reciprocal views along the rights-of-way established by L'Enfant streets, as well as to and from squares, circles, and reservations.

#### Historic Plan of Washington: Streets and Avenues

The federal government should:

5. Protect, maintain, and restore, where applicable, the L'Enfant street network and rights-of-way.

6. Restore or rehabilitate historic streets that have been inappropriately disrupted or closed to their original right-of-way or configuration at the earliest opportunity.
7. Avoid inappropriate traffic channelization, obtrusive signage and security features, and other physical intrusions that obscure the character of the right-of-way and viewsheds.
8. Protect the open space of the L'Enfant streets and avenues. Maintain the integrity, form, design of the L'Enfant system of streets as well as the street trees that frame axial views and reinforce the city's historic landscape character.
9. Protect the historic importance and function of the streets as operational thoroughfares.
10. Construct building facades to the street right-of-way lines (building lines) to reinforce the spatial definition of the historic street plan.
11. Protect the character and alignment of the boundary streets of the District of Columbia as defining features of the capital city.

Historic Plan of Washington: Open Space and Reservations

The federal government should:

12. Protect, rehabilitate, and restore the public squares, circles, reservations and the park system that are a legacy of the Plan of the City of Washington.
13. Protect the reservations that contain historic landscapes and features from incompatible changes or intrusions.
14. Protect the open space and viewsheds across reservations created by L'Enfant streets and avenues.
15. Embellish L'Enfant reservations with monuments, fountains, and civic art to enhance these open spaces in accordance with the Commemorative Works Act where applicable.
16. Protect and maintain the historic spatial significance of the L'Enfant reservations when designing and locating physical security measures.
17. Protect, rehabilitate, and enhance the extensions of major L'Enfant rights-of-way and associated reservations throughout the District of Columbia as part of the open space framework of the national capital.

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## Stewardship of Historic Properties

Federal agencies working in concert with local officials and interested citizens must be careful stewards of the historic properties under their care or affected by their decisions. Agencies are responsible for preserving historic properties while also facing the challenge of new and evolving uses and missions. The federal government has at its disposal many tools for the protection and enhancement of historic properties: laws, regulations, executive orders, federal planning and policy initiatives, the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive *Plan for the National Capital* and individual agency policies. It has the obligation to coordinate with local and private entities and, when appropriate, to encourage partnerships with these entities. NCPC provides one of several public forums where planning and historic preservation consultation can occur. The federal government is a primary advocate for, and protector of, the image and legacy of the nation's capital.

The cornerstone of strong historic preservation planning is the identification of historic properties. Many of the historic resources in the National Capital Region have already been identified and are widely recognized and acknowledged through historic designation. Many of Washington's landmarks are well known and there are hundreds of historic properties and historic districts in the District of Columbia and region. Many of these resources are significant for their local history as well as for their role in the nation's history. Recognizing the significance of these properties and educating the public on their significance is an important component to their protection and management. At times the value of historic places or features many not be readily apparent and it is important to publicize information on their significance for them to be understood. This includes all types of resources such as archaeological sites, landscapes, and Modern era (post World War II) properties. While many historic properties in Washington date to the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century, there are also resources related to the recent past that are worthy of recognition. The federal government played a critical role in urban renewal and was responsible for the development of many Modern era resources. One of the historic preservation challenges facing the federal government today is the evaluation of these properties.

### Section B: Identification of Historic Properties Policies

The federal government should:

1. Identify and protect historic properties and disseminate information about their significance to the public.
2. Recognize that there may be Modern era (post World War II) resources including buildings, structures, and landscapes that are historically significant and reflect design or cultural significance of the recent past. Identify and protect these resources to ensure that properties that have not been evaluated for listing in the *National Register of Historic Places* are nonetheless noted for their potential future significance and are treated accordingly.

3. Coordinate with local agencies, citizen groups, and property owners in the identification, designation, and protection of historic properties, public and private, since collectively these resources reflect the image and history of the National Capital Region.
4. Conduct archaeological investigations at the earliest phases of master planning or project development in order to avoid the disturbance of archaeological resources.
5. Recognize that historic federal properties are sometimes important for local history and ensure that locally significant characteristics or qualities are maintained.

### **Protection and Management of Historic Properties**

The protection and management of historic properties are critical elements to successful historic preservation planning. The federal government owns and controls many of the nation's most significant historic resources, including the National Mall, and these properties should be protected for future generations. Sections 106 and 110 of NHPA provide the foundation for federal preservation policies, stewardship of historic properties, and decision making. Federal agencies protect their historic resources by listing them in the National Register or by determining that they are eligible for listing in the National Register. This step, in turn, provides further regulatory protection during the planning and implementation of rehabilitation and new construction projects. Section 106 provides the framework for the regulatory process by which federal agencies reach decisions about historic properties under their jurisdiction. Historic preservation planning occurs during the design of individual projects, during the development of master plans, and, indeed, through federal agencies' efforts to research, evaluate, protect, and manage historical and cultural resources under their jurisdiction.

The Section 106 regulations establish the process by which federal agencies consider the effects of their proposed actions on historic properties. For many projects, Section 106 requires that federal agencies consult with the State Historic Preservation Offices of Maryland, the District of Columbia, or Virginia, involved Indian tribes, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Relevant federal and county or municipal agencies (including NCPC), interested professional, civic, and community organizations and individuals join public agencies in the consultation process.

Section 110 requires federal agencies to proactively identify, designate, and protect historic properties under their jurisdiction. Agencies such as the General Services Administration, the National Park Service, and the Department of Defense have large inventories of historic properties, entailing a significant commitment of resources in all aspects of property stewardship. Smaller agencies with limited land holdings, however, are also required to identify and protect their historic properties, even if property management is not central to their mission.

Along with the requirements of Section 106 and 110, federal agencies' master plans are primary tools for assessing historic resources, developing long term goals and plans, coordinating with other public and private entities, and implementing new planning methods and technologies. NCPC reviews these master plans, verifying and participating in consultation with local

preservation offices and providing an opportunity for public involvement. For installations with more complex historic preservation challenges, federal agencies may be asked to prepare management plans to provide in-depth procedures for the treatment of their historic properties. Master planning documents are an important tool used by the Commission in reviewing individual site and building plans.

### **Section C: Protection and Management of Historic Properties**

The federal government should:

1. Sustain exemplary standards of historic property stewardship.
2. Integrate the preservation, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic properties, including buildings and landscapes, into master plans for federal campuses and facilities.
3. Preserve, rehabilitate, and protect historic landscapes and open spaces, both natural and designed, which are an integral component of federal properties.
4. Protect significant archaeological resources by leaving them intact and undisturbed. Maintain an inventory of sites with a potential for archaeological discovery and significance.
5. Use historic properties for their original purpose or, if no longer feasible, for an adaptive use that is appropriate for the context and consistent with the significance and character of the property.
6. Ensure the continued preservation of federal historic properties through ongoing maintenance and transfer to an appropriate new steward when disposal of historic properties is appropriate.
7. Plan, where feasible, for federal historic properties to serve as catalysts for local economic development and tourism.
8. Promote the integration of sustainability objectives with the preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration of historic properties.
9. Protect and rehabilitate the National Mall and its monumental character as a historic open space that functions as the nation's preeminent gathering space.
10. Protect and preserve in place the extant boundary stones marking the original survey of the District of Columbia.



11. Ensure that the sites and settings for federally owned historic assets in the region are preserved and maintained as integral parts of the National Capital Region's historic character.

## Design Review

Through the insistence on good new design and stewardship of its historic buildings and open space, the federal government is a primary advocate for, and protector of, the image and legacy of the nation's capital. The character of adjacent historic properties must be considered when a historic building can no longer be used as originally intended, an addition or modernization is needed, or a new facility must be constructed. Complex planning and design decisions must be made by federal and local planners during the renovation or rehabilitation of historic properties. At times, in partnership with private entities, the federal government will pursue land acquisitions, transfer property, propose the adaptive use of historic buildings, expand federal facilities, or undertake site and campus development. In all of these cases, the federal government should encourage design based on the premise of compatibility with the surrounding historic context. Rather than imitate historic buildings, a rehabilitation or new construction project should find a balance between contemporary design and the surrounding historic context. While finding a balance can be a challenge, strong contemporary architecture is necessary for the city to continue to evolve and function as the nation's capital. Current and future historic preservation challenges for federal agencies include:

- Preserving the significant features and qualities of their historic properties through proactive maintenance of historic building fabric and designed landscape settings.
- Adapting historic properties for new and additional uses by modernizing building systems and reallocating interior space while retaining significant interior architectural features such as lobbies, elevators, and public rooms and corridors.
- Responding to changes in visitation or use without affecting the historic significance of the property.
- Ensuring that historically significant parks and open space retain their integrity through the careful consideration of planning and design of potential facilities in historic landscapes and settings.
- Finding creative, appropriate solutions to changing requirements such as the provision of security measures. The desire for increased security around federal facilities is a challenge to designers, historians, and security experts alike and is best addressed in a concerted manner that respects the historic features of each site.
- Protecting and strengthening historic urban design features of the Plan of the City of Washington. In the District of Columbia, any proposal to close a portion of a L'Enfant Plan street or to not conform to the right-of-way building line requires the closest scrutiny and consideration of alternatives.
- Protecting the character of the region's natural features, many of which have historical or cultural significance, such as the river shorelines, the ridge of the topographic bowl,

agricultural land, parks, and designed landscapes, including areas planned for public access and enjoyment.

- Ensuring that new construction is responsive to the character of well-established built environments and reflects a commensurate level of design excellence.
- Collaborating with state and local governments in the protection and enrichment of the cultural and historic heritage of the region.
- Integrating sustainability objectives in the renovation or rehabilitation of existing facilities while also preserving and protecting historic and character defining features.

### **Section D: Design Review**

The federal government should:

1. Ensure that new construction is compatible with the qualities and character of historic buildings and their settings, in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and the *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.
2. Work cooperatively with local agencies to ensure that development adjacent to historic properties does not detract from their historic character, but is compatible with the surrounding context.
3. Protect the settings, including viewsheds, of historic properties, as integral parts of the historic character of the property.

### **Historic Image of the Capital**

As the capital city, Washington represents the nation. The image of Washington is experienced by residents and visitors, and transmitted around the nation and world by the media, the arts and literature, familiar historic photographs—even through our currency. This resonating and powerful image is formed in part by individual buildings and monuments, and in part by the overall urban design of the city—particularly because central Washington's overall form has been explicitly, and very successfully, designed to create and convey a setting that symbolically expresses the nation's ideals/values.

This image evokes and reinforces our national aspirations, and is the backdrop to our nation's celebration, culture, and political life. Now that the federal establishment has grown beyond the original capital city to become a significant presence throughout the District of Columbia and beyond, the historic resources of the entire region have a role in shaping the image of the capital.

The following policies are intended to recognize and protect the overall character of the capital's image, and improve it where needed. The guidance helps to ensure that future construction contributes to strengthening the significant architectural and planning character, achieved over

centuries, that makes the national capital a special and unique place. These policies work hand in hand with the policies in the Federal Urban Design Element to provide goals and guidance to federal agencies in protecting historic resources, improving federal building design and supporting a high quality public realm in Washington.

### **Section E: Historic Image of the Capital**

The federal government should:

1. Federal development should adhere to the high aesthetic standards established by the planning and design legacy of the Plan of the City of Washington (L'Enfant and McMillan Plans).
2. Plan carefully for appropriate uses and compatible design in and near the monumental core to protect and preserve the nation's key historic properties.
3. Federal facilities and spaces should respect and complement the capital's rich architectural heritage and historic resources.
4. Protect the skyline formed by the region's natural features, particularly the topographic bowl around the L'Enfant City from incompatible changes.
5. Protect, enhance, and restore vistas and views, both natural and designed, which are an integral part of the Plan of the City of Washington and the national capital's image.
6. Design transportation infrastructure that is consistent with the urban design principles of the Plan of the City of Washington (L'Enfant Plan and the McMillan Plan) and surrounding historic properties.
7. Recognize the role historic properties, memorials, and monuments have in defining the national capital and its image.

#### *Call Out Box: The Secretary of the Interior's Standards*

The Secretary of the Interior has established standards for historic preservation programs, including those advising federal agencies on the treatment of historic properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* have been developed to cover a wide range of preservation activities as well as types of historic properties. There are separate standards for preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction, as well as for acquisition. In addition, NPS has developed Guidelines to assist in applying the Secretary of the

Interior's Standards to these different preservation options and to different types of historic properties.

Federal agencies most commonly use *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* in conjunction with the *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* in carrying out their preservation responsibilities for properties in federal ownership or control, or for properties affected by federal projects. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards provide guidance for the preservation of a historic property's significance through the preservation of its historic materials and features. The National Park Service defines rehabilitation as "the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alteration, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values." Use of the term assumes that some alteration of the historic building is required in order to make the building suitable for a current or new use. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines provide guidance on how to achieve these alterations without the loss of historic building fabric and finishes that define the building's historic character.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

8. Archaeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property.

The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Appendix 3 – Proposed changes to the policies in the Preservation and Historic Features Element  
(track-changes document)

**~~Preservation and Historic Features~~ Historic Preservation Element**

**Existing Policies**

**Bold** = text to be added text

**Strike** = text to be deleted

~~Goal Statement: Preserve and enhance the image and identify of the nation's capital and region through design and development that is respectful of the guiding principles of the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans, the enduring value of historic buildings and places, and the symbolic character of the capital's setting.~~

**Revised Goal Statement: Preserve, protect, and rehabilitate historic properties in the National Capital Region and promote design and development that is respectful of the guiding principles established by the Plan of for the City of Washington (L'Enfant and McMillan Plans) and the symbolic character of the capital's setting.**

**Section C-A: The Historic Plan of Washington, D.C.**

The federal government should:

- ~~1. Develop the monumental core in accordance with the principles of the *Legacy Plan* and the policies of the *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*. The National Mall's historic open space and monumental character should be respected and preserved for the benefit of future generations. New development should not infringe on the integrity of the National Mall and the surrounding monumental core, and should be excluded from the *Reserve* (in accordance with the Commemorative Works Act, as amended).~~
- ~~2. Promote continuity in the historic design framework of the nation's capital by protecting and enhancing the elements, views, and principles of the L'Enfant Plan. Both the federal and the District of Columbia governments should adhere to these principles in any improvements or alterations to the historic framework.~~
- 1. Preserve, rehabilitate, enhance, and restore (where applicable) the Plan of for the City of Washington (L'Enfant and McMillan Plans) and the urban design principles established by the Plan including building placement, street layout, vistas, and open spaces.**
- 2. Locate memorials, museums, and major federal facilities with respect for the urban design principles established by the Plan of for the City of Washington (L'Enfant**

~~and McMillan Plans).~~ to support key design features of the L'Enfant Plan, including major streets and avenues, waterfronts, and scenic overlooks.

- ~~3. Protect the character of the historic parkways in the region through the careful planning of public and private development within their viewsheds.~~

## Views

### **The federal government should:**

1. Protect **and maintain** views outward from the L'Enfant City and views inward from vantage points along the rim of the topographic bowl from inappropriate intrusions **and modifications**. Open space should be preserved to allow for public use and enjoyment of these views. ~~(Examples include the west campus of St. Elizabeths Hospital and other parts of the Anacostia ridge, the Arlington ridge, and the escarpment north of Florida Avenue, NW~~
2. Protect the reciprocal views along the rights-of-way **established by L'Enfant streets**, as well as to and from squares, circles, and reservations.

## Streets and Avenues

### **The federal government should:**

- ~~1. Protect the integrity, form, and design of the L'Enfant Plan's system of streets and reservations from inappropriate new buildings and physical incursions.~~
2. Protect, **maintain, and restore, where applicable**, and control the visual and functional qualities of the L'Enfant **street network** and rights-of-way.
3. Restore **or rehabilitate** historic streets that have been inappropriately disrupted or closed to their original right-of-way or configuration at the earliest opportunity.
4. **Avoid inappropriate traffic channelization, obtrusive signage and security features, and other physical intrusions that obscure the character of the right-of-way and viewsheds.**
- ~~4. Protect the open space of the L'Enfant streets and avenues. Maintain the integrity, form, design of the L'Enfant system of streets as well as the street trees that frame axial views and reinforce the city's historic landscape character. The exceptional width and openness of the street rights-of-way constitutes public space that helps to define the character of the city.~~

5. Protect the historic importance and function of the streets as operational thoroughfares. ~~and avoid inappropriate traffic channelization that obscures the character of the right-of-way.~~
6. Construct building facades to the street right-of-way lines (building lines) to reinforce the spatial definition of the historic street plan.
7. ~~Provide and maintain street trees to help frame axial views and reinforce the historic green character of the nation's capital.~~
8. ~~Enhance and develop the~~ **Protect the character and alignment of the** boundary streets of the District of Columbia as defining features of ~~Washington~~ **the capital city.**

### **Open Space and Reservations**

#### **The federal government should:**

1. **Protect, rehabilitate, and restore the public squares, circles, reservations and park system that are a legacy of the Plan of the City of Washington.**
2. Protect the reservations that contain historic landscapes and features from incompatible changes or ~~incursions~~ **intrusions.**
3. Protect the open space **and viewsheds across reservations** created by L'Enfant streets **and avenues.**
4. Embellish L'Enfant reservations, ~~avenues, and streets~~ with monuments, fountains, and civic art **to enhance these open spaces** ~~placed to provide views and points of reference,~~ in accordance with the Commemorative Works Act where applicable.
5. ~~Take into account~~ **Protect and maintain** the historic spatial significance of the L'Enfant ~~rights-of-way and reservations~~ when designing and locating physical security measures. ~~along L'Enfant streets and reservations~~
6. Protect, **rehabilitate**, and enhance the ~~later~~ extensions of major L'Enfant rights-of-way and associated reservations throughout the District of Columbia as part of the open space framework of the national capital.

## **Section B: Identification of Historic Properties**

#### **The federal government should:**

1. Identify and protect ~~its~~ historic properties and disseminate information about their significance to the public.



2. Recognize that there may be **Modern era (post World War II) resources including buildings, structures, and landscapes that are historically significant and reflect design or cultural significance of the recent past. Identify and protect these resources** to ensure that properties ~~that have not been not yet listed~~ **evaluated for listing** in the *National Register of Historic Places* are nonetheless noted for their potential future significance and are treated accordingly.
3. Coordinate with local agencies, citizen groups, and property owners in the identification, designation, and protection of historic properties, public and private, since collectively these resources reflect the image and history of the National Capital Region.
4. Conduct archaeological investigations at the earliest phases of ~~site or~~ master planning ~~phases or project development~~ in order to avoid the disturbance of archaeological resources.
5. Recognize that historic federal properties are sometimes important for local history and ensure that locally significant characteristics or qualities are maintained.

## Section C: Protection and Management of Historic Properties

The federal government should:

1. Sustain exemplary standards of historic property stewardship.
- ~~2. Identify and protect its historic properties and disseminate information about their significance to the public.~~
- ~~3. Support campus master planning and other planning initiatives as an opportunity to evaluate potential historic resources and to develop management plans for their protection and use.~~
4. **Integrate the preservation, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic properties, including buildings and landscapes, into master plans for federal campuses and facilities.**
- ~~5. Ensure that properties **that have not been** not yet listed **evaluated for listing** in the *National Register of Historic Places* are nonetheless noted for their potential future significance and are treated accordingly.~~
- ~~6. Effort should be taken to **Identify and protect significant Modern era (post World War II) resources including buildings and landscapes** modernist architecture and landscapes, and properties **that convey and reflect design and cultural significance of the recent past.** a significant an evolving understanding of cultural significance.~~

- 
- ~~7. Identify and protect both the significant historic design integrity and the use of historic landscapes and open space.~~ **Preserve, rehabilitate, and protect historic landscapes and open spaces, both natural and designed, which are an integral component of federal properties.**
  - ~~6. Protect the settings of historic properties, including views to and from the sites where significant, as integral parts of the historic character of the property.~~
  7. Protect significant archaeological resources by leaving them intact **and undisturbed.** and Maintain an inventory of sites with a potential for archaeological discovery and **significance.**
  - ~~8. Conduct archaeological investigations at the earliest phases of site or master planning phases or project development in order to avoid the disturbance of archaeological resources.~~
  9. Use historic properties for their original purpose or, if no longer feasible, for an adaptive use that is appropriate for the context and consistent with the significance and character of the property.
  10. Ensure the continued preservation of federal historic properties through ongoing maintenance and transfer to an appropriate new steward when disposal of historic properties is appropriate.
  - ~~11. Ensure that new construction is compatible with the qualities and character of historic buildings and their settings, in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and the *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.~~
  - ~~12. Coordinate with local agencies, citizen groups, and property owners in the identification, designation, and protection of historic properties, public and private, since collectively these resources reflect the image and history of the National Capital Region.~~
  - ~~13. Work cooperatively with local agencies to ensure that development adjacent to historic properties does not detract from their historic character,~~ **but is compatible, and respects the surrounding context.**
  - ~~14. Recognize that historic federal properties are sometimes important for local history and ensure that locally significant characteristics or qualities are maintained.~~
  15. Plan, where feasible, for federal historic properties to serve as catalysts for local economic development and tourism.

16. **Promote the integration of sustainability objectives with the preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration of historic properties.**
17. **Protect and rehabilitate the National Mall and its monumental character as a historic open space that functions as the nation's preeminent gathering space.**
18. **Protect and** preserve in place the extant boundary stones marking the original survey of the District of Columbia.
19. **Ensure that the sites and settings for federally owned historic assets in the region are preserved and maintained as integral parts of the National Capital Region's historic character.**

## Section D: Design Review

The federal government should:

4. Ensure that new construction is compatible with the qualities and character of historic buildings and their settings, in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and the *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.
5. Work cooperatively with local agencies to ensure that development adjacent to historic properties does not detract from their historic character, but is compatible with the surrounding context.
6. Protect the settings, **including viewsheds**, of historic properties, **including views to and from sites where significant**, as integral parts of the historic character of the property.

## Section E: Historic Image of the Capital

The federal government should:

- ~~1. Express the dignity befitting the image of the federal government in the national capital.~~ Federal development should adhere to the high aesthetic standards ~~already~~ established by the planning and design legacy of the **Plan of the City of Washington (L'Enfant and McMillan Plans)**. ~~nation's capital. This legacy encompasses both the old and the new—the capital's rich architectural heritage, continually augmented by the design contributions of each generation.~~
2. Plan carefully for appropriate uses and compatible design in and near the monumental core to **protect and preserve the nation's key historic properties.**

3. **Federal facilities and spaces should respect and complement** the capital's rich architectural heritage **and historic resources.**
4. ~~Plan carefully for appropriate uses and compatible design in and near the monumental core to reinforce and enhance its special role in the image of the nation's capital.~~
5. ~~Preserve the horizontal character of the national capital through enforcement of the 1910 Height of Buildings Act (36 Stat. 452; D.C. Code, sec. 5-401 et seq.).~~
6. Protect the skyline formed by the region's natural features, particularly the topographic bowl around ~~central Washington~~ **the L'Enfant City as well as** historically significant built features, from **incompatible changes, intrusions, such as antenna towers, water towers, and rooftop equipment.**
7. Protect, ~~and enhance,~~ **and restore** the vistas and views, both natural and designed, which are an integral part of the **Plan of the City of Washington and the** national capital's image.
8. ~~Create~~ **Design** transportation infrastructure that is consistent with the **urban design principles of the Plan of the City of Washington (L'Enfant Plan and the McMillan Plan) and surrounding historic properties.** ~~pedestrian character of the L'Enfant City and other historic settings. (Bridges across the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers should be integrated with the design character of historic contexts. Highway structures should be removed and replaced with at-grade streets where possible.)~~
9. ~~Encourage the practice of good design principles throughout the region to continually strengthen the image of the nation's capital.~~
10. ~~Design exterior lighting to contribute to the capital's nighttime image and suggest~~ **maintain** an appropriate hierarchy among the **memorials, monuments, and important civic buildings and spaces** symbols and features of the nation's capital. **The U.S. Capital should be the most prominent features in the nighttime skyline.**
11. **Recognize the role historic properties, memorials, and monuments have in defining the national capital and its image.**

Appendix 4 – Proposed updated policies for the Preservation and Historic Features Element  
(document with changes “accepted”)

## **Historic Preservation Element**

### **Updated Policies**

Revised Goal Statement: Preserve, protect, and rehabilitate historic properties in the National Capital Region and promote design and development that is respectful of the guiding principles established by the Plan of ~~for~~ the City of Washington (L’Enfant and McMillan Plans) and the symbolic character of the capital’s setting.

#### **Section A: The Historic Plan of Washington, D.C.**

The federal government should:

1. Preserve, rehabilitate, enhance, and restore (where applicable) the Plan of the City of Washington (L’Enfant and McMillan Plans) and the urban design principles established by the Plan including building placement, street layout, vistas, and open spaces.
2. Locate memorials, museums, and major federal facilities with respect for the urban design principles established by the Plan of the City of Washington (L’Enfant and McMillan Plans).

#### Historic Plan of Washington: Views

The federal government should:

3. Protect and maintain views outward from the L’Enfant City and views inward from vantage points along the rim of the topographic bowl from inappropriate intrusions and modifications. Open space should be preserved to allow for public use and enjoyment of these views.
4. Protect the reciprocal views along the rights-of-way established by L’Enfant streets, as well as to and from squares, circles, and reservations.

#### Historic Plan of Washington: Streets and Avenues

The federal government should:

5. Protect, maintain, and restore, where applicable, the L’Enfant street network and rights-of-way.

6. Restore or rehabilitate historic streets that have been inappropriately disrupted or closed to their original right-of-way or configuration at the earliest opportunity.
7. Avoid inappropriate traffic channelization, obtrusive signage and security features, and other physical intrusions that obscure the character of the right-of-way and viewsheds.
8. Protect the open space of the L'Enfant streets and avenues. Maintain the integrity, form, design of the L'Enfant system of streets as well as the street trees that frame axial views and reinforce the city's historic landscape character.
9. Protect the historic importance and function of the streets as operational thoroughfares.
10. Construct building facades to the street right-of-way lines (building lines) to reinforce the spatial definition of the historic street plan.
11. Protect the character and alignment of the boundary streets of the District of Columbia as defining features of the capital city.

#### Historic Plan of Washington: Open Space and Reservations

The federal government should:

12. Protect, rehabilitate, and restore the public squares, circles, reservations and park system that are a legacy of the Plan of the City of Washington.
13. Protect the reservations that contain historic landscapes and features from incompatible changes or intrusions.
14. Protect the open space and viewsheds across reservations created by L'Enfant streets and avenues.
15. Embellish L'Enfant reservations with monuments, fountains, and civic art to enhance these open spaces in accordance with the Commemorative Works Act where applicable.
16. Protect and maintain the historic spatial significance of the L'Enfant reservations when designing and locating physical security measures.
17. Protect, rehabilitate, and enhance the extensions of major L'Enfant rights-of-way and associated reservations throughout the District of Columbia as part of the open space framework of the national capital.

### **Section B: Identification of Historic Properties**

The federal government should:

1. Identify and protect historic properties and disseminate information about their significance to the public.
2. Recognize that there may be Modern era (post World War II) resources including buildings, structures, and landscapes that are historically significant and reflect design or cultural significance of the recent past. Identify and protect these resources to ensure that properties that have not been evaluated for listing in the *National Register of Historic Places* are nonetheless noted for their potential future significance and are treated accordingly.
3. Coordinate with local agencies, citizen groups, and property owners in the identification, designation, and protection of historic properties, public and private, since collectively these resources reflect the image and history of the National Capital Region.
4. Conduct archaeological investigations at the earliest phases of master planning or project development in order to avoid the disturbance of archaeological resources.
5. Recognize that historic federal properties are sometimes important for local history and ensure that locally significant characteristics or qualities are maintained.

### **Section C: Protection and Management of Historic Properties**

The federal government should:

1. Sustain exemplary standards of historic property stewardship.
2. Integrate the preservation, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic properties, including buildings and landscapes, into master plans for federal campuses and facilities.
3. Preserve, rehabilitate, and protect historic landscapes and open spaces, both natural and designed, which are an integral component of federal properties.
4. Protect significant archaeological resources by leaving them intact and undisturbed. Maintain an inventory of sites with a potential for archaeological discovery and significance.
5. Use historic properties for their original purpose or, if no longer feasible, for an adaptive use that is appropriate for the context and consistent with the significance and character of the property.

6. Ensure the continued preservation of federal historic properties through ongoing maintenance and transfer to an appropriate new steward when disposal of historic properties is appropriate.
7. Plan, where feasible, for federal historic properties to serve as catalysts for local economic development and tourism.
8. Promote the integration of sustainability objectives with the preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration of historic properties.
9. Protect and rehabilitate the National Mall and its monumental character as a historic open space that functions as the nation's preeminent gathering space.
10. Protect and preserve in place the extant boundary stones marking the original survey of the District of Columbia.
11. Ensure that the sites and settings for federally owned historic assets in the region are preserved and maintained as integral parts of the National Capital Region's historic character.

#### **Section D: Design Review**

The federal government should:

1. Ensure that new construction is compatible with the qualities and character of historic buildings and their settings, in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and the *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.
2. Work cooperatively with local agencies to ensure that development adjacent to historic properties does not detract from their historic character, but is compatible with the surrounding context.
3. Protect the settings, including viewsheds, of historic properties, as integral parts of the historic character of the property.



### **Section E: Historic Image of the Capital**

The federal government should:

1. Federal development should adhere to the high aesthetic standards established by the planning and design legacy of the Plan of the City of Washington (L'Enfant and McMillan Plans).
2. Plan carefully for appropriate uses and compatible design in and near the monumental core to protect and preserve the nation's key historic properties.
3. Federal facilities and spaces should respect and complement the capital's rich architectural heritage and historic resources.
4. Protect the skyline formed by the region's natural features, particularly the topographic bowl around the L'Enfant City from incompatible changes.
5. Protect, enhance, and restore vistas and views, both natural and designed, which are an integral part of the Plan of the City of Washington and the national capital's image.
6. Design transportation infrastructure that is consistent with the urban design principles of the Plan of the City of Washington (L'Enfant Plan and the McMillan Plan) and surrounding historic properties.
7. Recognize the role historic properties, memorials, and monuments have in defining the national capital and its image.